

**COMPARISON OF HIERARCHICAL STRUCTURES  
AND MERGING OF DIFFERENCES**

**ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE**

A software tool to allow a user to compare a base file containing XML statements to a modified file and from the comparison, create a third file. The comparison between the base and modified files results in a comparison tree which contains, as nodes, all of the information in the base file as well as the differences located in the modified file. Differences between the nodes of the two files are highlighted in a comparison tree and the user may resolve the differences to create a third file or optionally incorporate the selected differences into the base file. As nodes are examined in the comparison tree and decisions made as to which nodes to include in the third file, differences in the comparison tree are resolved. As a difference is resolved, any node in the comparison tree dependent upon the now resolved difference is no longer highlighted if it too has had the difference resolved. The tool is most commonly used to determine changes made to a source code base file and allows the individual maintaining a stable source code base to determine if the changes in the modified file should be integrated into the base file.